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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 008911

SIPDIS

NSC STAFF FOR SINGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: SECOND STAGE RUNOFFS: MORE VIOLENCE,  
SIMILAR RESULTS

REF: A. CAIRO 8875

[B](#). CAIRO 8822

[C](#). CAIRO 8786

[D](#). CAIRO 8745

Classified by ECPO Minister Counselor Michael Corbin for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Runoffs for People's Assembly seats took place on November 26 in seven provinces. The November 26 polls were marred by street fighting, charges that security forces blocked access to some polling places, and charges that domestic monitors were threatened "systematically" and denied access to various polling places. Results indicate that Muslim Brotherhood candidates made another strong showing, as did independents affiliated the National Democratic Party. Several well-known NDP figures, including the sitting Minister of Irrigation and the former Agriculture Minister, lost their seats. End summary.

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Mayhem, Chaos, Mar Runoffs...  
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[1](#)2. (C) Runoffs for People's Assembly seats were staged on November 26 in Alexandria, the Nile Delta provinces of Beheira, Gharbiyya, Qalyoubia, and Port Said, as well as the Upper Egypt provinces of Qena and Fayyoun. The day saw a significant spike in thug violence, voter intimidation, denial of voter access and arrests of supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, as documented by domestic monitoring groups (paras 8-10), noted by contacts, and reported in the domestic and international media. A particular flashpoint was Tanta, where approximately 1500 Muslim Brotherhood supporters laid seige to the polling station at the Sayed Erian School, after electoral officials closed the station early. Thugs allegedly working for the local NDP candidate, former soccer star Ahmed Shobeir, intervened violently to disperse the crowd, as police fired tear gas. Twenty MB supporters were reportedly sent to the hospital.

[1](#)3. (C) Tear gas was also used to disperse angry crowds protesting early closings in Ghorbal, Alexandria, and in Port Said, as a number of MB supporters, including the son of local MB incumbent Akram al-Shaer, were arrested. The Muslim Brotherhood claimed that up 800 of its supporters were arrested on November 26 and the two days proceeding, while most media estimates put the number at 300-600. An American journalist who was among those tear-gassed in Ghorbal told poloff that the protest had started when security forces blocked access to the local polling station to all voters, including the local MB candidate, and only allowed those bussed in to vote. Thugs allegedly working for the local NDP candidate brawled with local MB supporters. "The good news is that the thugs here didn't have machetes, like those in Damanhour last week," (ref B) he quipped.

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...As Trends Continue  
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[1](#)4. (C) The runoffs for 122 seats on November 26 closed the second of three stages for the 2005 People's Assembly elections. The elections are now 2/3 complete, with the final round scheduled to commence on December 1, with runoffs on December 7. Egyptian and international media are carrying different reports of the final results for the second stage, reflecting the fact that results for all races have not yet been certified by the Parliamentary Elections Commission.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Our best count of results for the second stage is as follows:

NDP Candidates.....	31
Independent Candidates (linked to NDP).....	42
Muslim Brotherhood.....	36
Wafd.....	2
Other Independents.....	8

[1](#)6. (C) The results reflect a continuance of the trends started in the first stage: Official nominees of the NDP were outperformed by party rivals who ran as independents after they failed to get the official nod. The Muslim

Brothers (MB) also continued their march forward. The MBs may now have as many as 82 seats in the 444-seat People's Assembly and appear poised to easily exceed their initially stated goal of securing 90 seats in the new parliament. The officially recognized opposition parties have also been pushed farther into the margins of the Egyptian political stage. The NDP should still easily retain their 2/3 majority in parliament, and thus preserve the GOE's ability to push through its legislative agenda, but the tone and atmospherics of much parliamentary debate will inevitably be altered by the dramatic increase in Islamist representation.

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Symbolic Defeats  
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17. (C) Of the dozens of races fought on November 26, several deserve special mention:

-- Former Minister of Agriculture Youssef Wally, who was removed from the cabinet in the summer of 2004 with little fanfare after a three decade cabinet tenure, lost his seat to a Muslim Brotherhood candidate in Fayyoun, the desert oasis southwest of Cairo. Wally, who had also served as Secretary-General of the NDP for over a decade, epitomized

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for many observers the corruption of the ruling party's "old guard."

-- Alexandria University President Mohammed Abdellah, another long-serving NDP operative who had been trying to straddle the divide between party reform circles and the "old guard," fell to an independent rival (and sitting MP) in the Alexandria district of Montazah.

-- Khaled Mohiieldin, the 84 year old honorary chairman of the leftist Tagammu' Party, was defeated by a Muslim Brotherhood candidate in the Kafr Shukr constituency in the Nile Delta province of Qalyoubia. Mohiieldin, a respected "national figure" for his role as one of the "free officers" who overthrew the monarchy, is a living link to the Nasser era and a die-hard advocate of Nasser's notions of centrally-planned economics and robust secular nationalism.

-- Minister of Irrigation Mahmoud Abou Zeid also lost his seat in the Nile Delta province of Gharbiyaa to an independent rival. (However, Minister of Agriculture Ahmed el-Leithy won in Wadi Natroun, Beheira Province.)

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Monitors Cry Foul  
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18. (SBU) Domestic monitoring groups issued initial reports late on November 26 and on November 27. They reported increased difficulties for their staff in accessing the "vast majority" of polling stations. The Independent Coalition for Electoral Monitoring (ICEM), which had approximately 1500 observers deployed to monitor 121 races, also reported that "most" of its observers were denied access to counting centers despite many of them having previously secured official permission from the Ministry of Justice. ICEM also charged that:

--security forces who cordoned off a number of polling stations appeared to be denying access to the stations by any voters who appeared (by virtue of beards/veils/other indicators) to be MB supporters;

--thugs apparently supportive of NDP candidates attacked waiting voters at several polling stations;

--MB candidates were arrested in Port Said, Beheira, and Fayoum; and MB supporters were arrested in those locations, as well as Alexandria, Qena, and Gharbiya;

--opposition and independent party/candidate agents were denied access to polling stations;

--vote-buying was documented in Beheira, Suez, and Gharbiya;

-- ICEM also charged that its monitors had been "systematically targetted" with threats and intimidation and at least one of its staff, a monitor in Ismailiya had been badly beaten by thugs and hospitalized.

19. (SBU) The Egyptian Association for Supporting Democracy (EASD) also reported on a number of problems, including:

--increased violence;

--flagrant vote-buying and other fraud;

--NDP candidates used public transportation to bus supporters en masse to the polls;

--apparent security intervention to keep some voters away

from the polls.

110. (SBU) EASD also praised a number of supervisory judges who chose to suspend voting in several instances where security forces appeared to be working to keep certain prospective voters away from the polls. The dozen or so expatriate surveyors working for the National Democratic Institute (NDI) were also in the field on November 26. Their findings, which were shared with post by the NDI Country Director, tracked closely with those of the domestic observers.

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